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THE AGENDA PROCESS
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Prepared By:

JUDITH WEISS
Executive Assistant to the
City Manager

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Appendix I - Management of Public Comments in Other Jurisdictions

I. Introduction

The agenda process serves three primary purposes: communication, control and decision-making. As a communication system, the agenda informs department heads, the City staff, the Board of Directors, the general public and the press. In essence, the agenda is a weekly summary of the day-to-day business of the City.

As a control system, the agenda process provides a formal weekly review of the City's business. All agenda items must be approved by the appropriate department head and the City Manager, and "New Business" items are reviewed by the City Attorney as well, before they reach the Board. Items with fiscal impact are also reviewed by the Finance Director and the Management Analysis Division. The purpose, timing, costs and financing are all subject to this internal review.

Finally, and most importantly, the agenda process is a decision-making system which regularly brings City business to the attention of the City Manager and the Board of Directors for consideration and action.

In view of the importance of the agenda process to the operations of the City, it makes good management sense to carefully review this system to determine if there are areas requiring improvement. In recent months, both the League of Women Voters and the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce have raised concerns regarding the current procedures. In a letter dated January 26, 1981, the L.W.V. expressed its concern that hearings scheduled for a certain time are frequently delayed, thereby inconveniencing the public and reducing the opportunity for public comment on major policy issues. The Chamber of Commerce, in a letter dated November 7, 1980, requested that consideration be given to improving the system for providing the Board with written input prior to the time when a decision on an item is to be made. These comments are illustrative of the need to provide appropriate procedures for interfacing with the general public. In addition to external comments, there have also been a number of suggestions made by both staff and Board regarding scheduling, control and presentation of information.

With the retirement of the City Clerk and the impending reorganization of the City Board, it appears to be an opportune time to take a new look at how we get things done in the City and to consider making changes. For the past several months, as Executive Assistant to the City Manager, I have had the opportunity to observe first-hand the effectiveness and efficiency of the current system, and to identify areas where improvements could be made. All continuing members of the Board of Directors were surveyed to gather their input for this study. In addition, I have reviewed the professional literature as well as information on the agenda procedures used in 14 large (over 100,000 population) cities across

the country which have the Council-Manager form of government. This report will discuss the major areas of concern and outline recommendations for improving Pasadena's agenda process.

II. The Agenda Format

Comments from the Floor

The Board has had an unusually permissive policy on public comments. In most of the cities surveyed, comments from the floor are strictly limited and are offered at only one time during the meeting. (Appendix I to this report explains the procedures utilized in these other jurisdictions to handle public comment.) In the past several months, it has not been unusual to have these public comments run on for 45 minutes or longer, seriously upsetting the published agenda schedule relied upon by members of the general public. It is suggested that the Board place a time limit on public comments on non-agenda items at the beginning of the meeting. Public comments made at the end of the meeting would not need to be as restricted. Interface with the public and techniques for its improvement will be discussed in greater detail in Part IV of this report.

Hearings and Discussions

Some time ago the Board meetings on the second and fourth Tuesdays were considered "Hearing and Discussion" days and the first and third Tuesdays were used as "business" days and no major hearings and discussions were scheduled. Apparently the inflexibility of the system gave way to the scheduling of hearings and discussions throughout the month. In order to be responsive to the public and to consider policy issues in a timely manner, it is no doubt preferable to continue this more flexible scheduling. Although this is a step in the right direction, there are still a number of problems in the current scheduling arrangements.

Because of the number of zoning appeals which require the Board's attention, public hearings take up an increasing amount of the Board's time. In addition, major policy issues also require hearing and discussion. As a consequence, the agendas have had a tendency to become "overloaded" with scheduled items and the Mayor and Board have conducted the meetings under the pressure to "keep on shcedule". In these circumstances, there is a greater possibility that major policy items will not receive the type of thoughtful consideration and discussion which is essential to responsible decision-making.

With the exception of the first week of the month, when the Chamber is in use by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, afternoons are available for hearings and discussions. It has been the usual procedure, however, to schedule hearings and discussions in the morning so that the Board can conclude its business by noon. With the extra burden of acting as the Community Development Commission, it is quite likely that agendas will continue to remain heavy. Therefore, this increased workload should be acknowledged as a fact

of life and the agenda schedule should be planned accordingly, using both morning and afternoon hours.

The Mayor has quite correctly noted that the Board's schedule is "like riding a freight train". They must keep moving along if they are to keep on the time-table. It has been suggested that this problem could be remedied by more precise planning of the schedule during the Thursday "Agenda Review" sessions. In fact, the great majority of the hearings and discussions are set during regular meetings of the Board by the Board members themselves. As noted earlier, the League of Women Voters has urged the Board "to incorporate more realistic scheduling of hearings, discussions and presentations in its future City Board agendas." The City Manager and the Mayor should jointly evaluate this matter and determine appropriate procedures for addressing this problem.

New Business

New Business, which is frequently a rather lengthy list of administrative action items, is handled quite efficiently in a "sweep motion". Although some staff members have suggested the use of a "consent calendar", the manner in which new business is currently handled appears to work as expeditiously as a consent calendar. The timing of "New Business" could stand some improvement, however. Usually, the Board works in the New Business between scheduled hearings and discussions. This procedure is somewhat dysfunctional to the organization as well as inconvenient to the public. Department heads with a "New Business" item on the agenda tune into the Board meeting or stand outside the Council Chamber waiting for the item to come up. These hours spent waiting are generally not productive ones. Members of the public who call to ask when a particular item will be on are frustrated to learn that it can be any time that day, and it is difficult to predict the hour with any certainty. When a particular "New Business" item involves the comment and/or participation of an outside attorney or consultant, it is usually possible to take the item "out of order" at a certain time. It would be even more helpful to schedule "New Business" immediately after "comments from the floor" and before any hearings and discussions. In this way, department heads are free to carry out their responsibilities for the rest of the day and the general public can be given at least a general time-frame for the Board's consideration of new business. This becomes a particularly important consideration now that the Board will be meeting at 3:30 p.m. one Thursday a month.

Information from Officers and Departments

Each week the agenda carries claims against the City under Information from the City Clerk. Risk Management has indicated that this is probably not to the City's advantage and may well encourage additional litigation. Since the Board always "files" the claims in a routine motion, it has been suggested that this item be dropped from the agenda and included in the Board Letter.

The Government Tort Liability law of the State Code does require, however, that such claims be filed. Filing these claims through the City Clerk is the most expeditious way of handling this matter. The City Attorney has suggested that information concerning claims need not be detailed in as specific a manner as is currently utilized. If the Board should want the additional information concerning the amount and type of claim, it could be provided in the Board Letter; and the disposition of such claims could be provided in the City Attorney's "potpourri".

Communications and Petitions

In the course of interviewing the various Board members, the policy of including all correspondence addressed to the Board in the week's agenda was seriously questioned. It was noted that most of the correspondence was "received and filed" and that items requiring attention were directed to the City Manager. It was suggested that "Communications" be deleted from the agenda since they could be handled between the Mayor and the City Manager. It was further suggested that items which the Mayor particularly wanted to share with her colleagues could be included in the Board Letter.

Recommendations

- Encourage brevity in public comments on non-agenda items by placing a time limit on comments made at the beginning of the Board meeting.
- Schedule Hearings and Discussions throughout the day rather than in the morning only.
- The Mayor and the City Manager should jointly evaluate the matter of scheduling of hearings and discussions and determine appropriate procedures.
- Schedule "New Business" immediately after "Comments from the Floor".
- Delete undisputed "Claims Against the City" from the agenda and include this information in the Board Letter.
- Delete the "Communications" section from the Board agenda.

III. Board Action or Administrative Review?

In the interests of expediting the Board meetings and doing the City's business in an efficient fashion, certain items could be deleted entirely from the Board agenda. These include certain budget decisions, zoning matters, and purchasing proceedings. By eliminating these types of routine administrative matters and/or review proceedings from the agenda and delegating them to staff, the Board would have additional time to consider major policy issues.

Budget

Currently whenever a department head wishes to transfer funds between personnel and materials in a particular program budget, a request must go to the Board for approval. In almost all cases, salary savings are being utilized to pay for an unanticipated expenditure. One recent example of this type of routine request was on the 4/14/81 agenda when Public Safety went before the Board to request approval of a \$540 transfer of funds to purchase a desk. While not disputing the need for controls, this is the type of item which should really be handled administratively. I would, therefore, suggest that only transfers between Departments and Agencies or appropriations from the General Fund reserve be brought to the Board for approval. Transfers among line items in either Personnel or services and supplies by memorandum to H.A.D. should continue to be done at the discretion of the department head, and intradepartmental transfers of up to \$10,000 between Personnel and services and supplies and equipment could be accomplished with the review of MAD and the approval of the City Manager.

Zoning Appeals

A number of the Board members interviewed agreed that zoning commanded an inordinate amount of the Board's time. According to a time study done by Student Intern Paul Hartman, zoning and zoning-related items consumed 22% of the agenda in August, 1980; 9% for the month of September, 1980; 23% for the month of October, 1980, and 29% for the month of November. In contrast, all members of the Board who answered the staff survey stated that insufficient time is devoted to major policy or Board initiatives. How then do we "clear the decks" to enable the Board to use its time more efficiently and to become a more pro-active body?

In FY '82, the Zoning Ordinance will be largely rewritten, which should make a substantial contribution to improving this situation. During this process, consideration should be given to resting the primary decision-making with the Zoning Administrator, with the Planning Commission serving as the Appeal Board. The Board of Directors could still retain the option of "calling up" zoning decisions for hearing and review, however, they would be spared the major portion of the zoning hearings. During the interviews with Board members, this suggestion was put forth with mixed reaction.

The Board was wary of resting so much authority with a fairly new Zoning Administrator. It was apparent the current Zoning Administrator did not have the confidence of the Board, because of his relative youth and lack of experience in the City, however, now that the Zoning Ordinance is to be substantially redrafted and the current Zoning Administrator has had an opportunity to "age" in office, the time may be right to reconsider this procedure.

As an alternative to the proposal described above, it has been suggested that a system of administrative adjudication be employed, similar to the method used by Federal regulatory commissions in handling disputed decisions. Issues of dispute are narrowed prior to the appeal. Therefore, the Board would not consider the entire zoning decision but only one or two issues in the overall case. This type of procedure could well shorten the time required to review decisions, but it might be difficult for the general public to understand precisely how the system worked. Despite possible difficulties in implementation, consideration should be given to this proposal when the revision of the Zoning Ordinance gets underway.

Purchasing

At the present time, under Ordinance No. 5061, Section 3.04, the City Board must approve or authorize all specifications prior to bidding. The Administrative Services Agency has suggested that this procedure be revised to permit the City Manager to approve specifications. This procedure would save staff man hours as well as resulting in a substantial reduction in Board agenda items.

Under Article X of the City Charter, any purchase exceeding \$10,000 must be approved by the Board. With the dramatic inflation of the last few years, many more items must now come before the Board for approval. Examples of purchase orders which now require such approval include food for jail prisoners, photo supplies for Public Safety, asphalt for street patching, automobile replacement parts, etc. These P.O.'s clutter the agenda and also increase the work load of the Purchasing Division. It is recommended that the Charter be amended to increase the \$10,000 limitation to at least \$25,000.

Recommendations

- Modify procedures for transferring funds within program budgets so that Board approval is not required.
- Board approval on budgetary modifications should only be required for inter-fund transfers, interdepartmental transfers, appropriations from the General Fund reserve, or for intradepartmental program transfers exceeding \$10,000.
- Revise the zoning appeal procedures to eliminate the substantial number of appeals now coming before the Board. This should be

done by either designating the Planning Commission as the appeals body or by designing a system of administrative adjudication which would significantly narrow the issues coming before the Board for decision.

- Amend the ordinance which requires the City Board to approve all specifications prior to bid. Revise the procedure to permit the City Manager to approve specifications.
- Amend the Charter to increase the purchase order limitation to at least \$25,000.

IV. Interface with the Public

The weekly meeting of the Board of Directors is a public meeting in every sense of the word, with the agenda distributed several days in advance and coverage provided by the press. Since the Board is gathered to conduct the people's business, every effort should be made to accommodate the public's participation in this event. If the Board approves the establishment of a Public Affairs Office in the FY '82 budget, the City will have additional resources available to perform this function in a more effective manner.

Agenda Progress

It is difficult under the present arrangements for a member of the public to follow the progress of the agenda without sitting in the City Chamber for the entire meeting. As pointed out earlier, scheduled hearings are often not on schedule, and even if the recommendations offered in Part II of this paper are readily implemented, it is likely schedules cannot be adhered to in the strictest manner. Therefore, it would be helpful if there were a phone number available to the public to check on the progress of the agenda. The citizen could then call and get a current reading on how far along the Board was and an educated guess on when the item of interest to him or her would be up for Board review and discussion.

Press

Press coverage of the Board meeting currently has no "give and take". The reporters take notes on the Board discussion and little effort is made by either the press or the staff to provide additional background information. Assuming that the Board meetings will be continuing into the afternoons in the future, a twenty-minute question-and-answer session for the press prior to the lunch break might facilitate media relations. It would provide an opportunity for the press to clarify information and for the Board members to elaborate and expand on comments made during the discussions. This encounter should be entirely optional but it is likely that the City would benefit by the Board's participation. It should be noted that the reporter is going to write the story anyway, with or without additional input. An opportunity to "tell our side of the story" should improve the final product.

It is envisioned that these twenty minute sessions could take place in the Board Conference Room with both staff and Board participating as required. This recommendation is made assuming that there will be a full time Public Affairs Officer position established to coordinate this activity. Questions from the press could be solicited in advance on Tuesday morning and the Public Affairs Office would be responsible for contacting appropriate staff members for any additional technical information.

Public Comments and Appearances

As noted earlier, public comments on non-agenda items should be limited during the morning session, with a less restricted comment period available at the end of the meeting. A statement requesting that these comments be kept brief, not to exceed _____ minutes, should be written on the agenda itself under "Comments from the Floor" and a similar statement should appear unobtrusively on the speaker's podium. As can be seen from the information gathered in the Appendix to this report, these techniques are in wide use and make good sense. Riverside, California, has recently instituted a "personal appearance request" procedure to ensure that persons making requests have exhausted all administrative remedies prior to appearing before the City Council. This procedure, as described by Riverside's City Manager Douglas Weiford, works as follows:

1. Upon receipt of a letter requesting a personal appearance before the Council, the City Clerk determines whether all City government administrative remedies have been exhausted. If not, the Clerk submits the matter to the City Manager for handling and so notifies the writer of the letter.
2. To ensure that the Council is aware of this procedure, a copy of the letter, with a notation of this disposition by the City Clerk, is included in the weekly Council letter.
3. If the letter writer insists on appearing before the Council even though administrative remedies have not been completely explored, the matter will be placed on the agenda without delay.

The Board may wish to establish a similar procedure in the interests of better serving the public as well as expediting the business of the Board meeting.

Input for Noticed Hearings

From time to time, with great success, the Board has used "speaker cards" to manage public input for scheduled hearings. There have also been well-attended hearings when this device has not been used and the result has been less desirable. The most recent examples of the latter were the hearings on the Old Pasadena Parking District when speakers were racing each other to the microphone. Speaker cards are a relatively easy technique to employ and could be used conveniently for all noticed hearings. The City Clerk could handle this function and public comments would be handled efficiently with far less pressure on the Mayor to control the crowd. Under the "Hearing and Discussion" section of the agenda, a notice could be included indicating that persons wishing to speak should complete a card and give it to the City Clerk, thereby ensuring that even "newcomers" to City Hall would quickly understand the procedure for participation.

Written Comments from the Public

In addition, or sometimes instead of appearing before the Board, a citizen or group wishes to provide written information in the agenda for the Board's review before a discussion is held and a decision is made. In November, 1980, the Chamber of Commerce related an incident wherein correspondence was hand-carried to the City Clerk on a Monday but did not reach the board in time for the Tuesday agenda. After querying the Clerk, the Chamber was told that written communications must be received on the Thursday prior to the Tuesday Board meeting. If this has, in fact, been the procedure, it should be relaxed. The Clerk's office should forward written correspondence pertaining to items listed on the agenda to the Board if received prior to the Board meeting. This would give the public until 5:00 p.m. Monday afternoon to file additional statements. A supplemental distribution could then be made on Monday night or Tuesday morning, if this information missed the Friday night distribution. Naturally, persons should be encouraged to get their comments in as early as possible, but at the same time the City staff has an obligation to be responsive and flexible.

Recommendations

- Provide a phone number for citizens to call to check on the progress of the agenda.
- Consider the establishment of a 20-minute question-and-answer session for the press prior to the lunch break.
- Limit public comments on non-agenda items during the morning session. Public comment taken at the end of the meeting would be unrestricted.
- Encourage brevity in public comments with a notice on the agenda and on the speaker's podium.
- Consider the establishment of a "personal appearance request" procedure, similar to the Riverside, California, system.
- Use speaker cards at all noticed hearings.
- Relax the deadline for written comments from the general public and use a supplemental Monday night distribution if necessary.

V. Internal Review

Coordinating, organizing and packaging the rather vast volume of information and recommendations for the Board's review and action is a complex task made more difficult by the necessity for keeping the agenda preparation on schedule and ensuring all items have received the appropriate legal and financial review. This section of the report will review the current internal procedures utilized in the City's agenda process.

The Schedule

Theoretically, the agenda schedule is as follows:

a) City Attorney Deadline

Items requiring resolutions or legal review must be submitted to the City Attorney's office no later than Wednesday at 8:00 a.m. prior to the following Tuesday's Board meeting. (The preparation of contracts requires the submission of full documentation 14 days in advance of desired Board action.)

b) City Manager Deadline

Other items not requiring City Attorney review, i.e., City Manager reports, are forwarded directly to the City Manager's office. The City Attorney's office is expected to forward its completed work for the agenda to the City Manager's office also. The deadline for all material to be submitted to the City Manager's office is Wednesday at 5:00 p.m.

c) City Clerk Deadline

The Executive Assistant, on behalf of the City Manager, makes a preliminary review of all agenda items. Once an item has been reviewed and a determination is made to place it on the upcoming agenda, it is forwarded to the City Clerk's office for listing. The deadline for forwarding all material to the City Clerk is Thursday noon.

d) Agenda Review

Agenda Review takes place every Thursday at 3:00 p.m. The City Manager, the Executive Assistant and the City Clerk sit down together to review the upcoming Tuesday's agenda. Refinements are made to the discussion schedule and agenda calendar, and the City Manager makes a cursory review of all reports intended for the Tuesday agenda.

c) Friday Agenda Follow-up

On Friday morning, the Executive Assistant follows up on all questions raised by the City Manager at the "agenda review" and redrafts portions of reports when necessary. Any major rewrites are sent back to the department heads for review and signature. "Late" reports, resolutions, and ordinances are tracked down and conferences are held to discuss items when there is staff disagreement or when additional information and research are required.

f) Printing of the Agenda

All final information for the agenda must be sent to the City Clerk by Friday, noon. On Friday afternoon, the agenda is duplicated, collated, and distributed. The full Board packet is expected to be ready by 5:00 p.m. on Friday and is delivered to the Board members on the Friday night prior to the Tuesday Board meeting.

In reality, the agenda schedule bears only a coincidental resemblance to the procedure described above. Items do not come to the City Manager's office from the City Attorney's office until late Thursday morning, and frequently they come in well past the noon deadline for submission to the City Clerk. City Manager reports, which do not require legal review, frequently arrive quite late. This results in about 80% of the agenda material arriving on the Executive Assistant's desk between 10:00 a.m. and noon on Thursday morning, leaving insufficient time to give a thorough review to all items. Although many of the items are routine and somewhat "boiler-plate", there are always several which raise questions and need to be discussed with the persons who prepared them. Despite the lapses in the schedule, Agenda Review is always at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, which means that the Executive Assistant and the City Clerk are usually "under the gun" to have items reviewed and listed so that the session can proceed in a meaningful fashion.

There are several ways in which this situation could be improved. A major contribution to the "bottleneck" in the City Attorney's office is the requirement that all resolutions must be drafted by an attorney. An exception has been made for the Public Works Department but all other departments are expected to adhere to this policy. All departments should be permitted and expected to prepare the resolutions that accompany their Board reports as well as routine contract amendments and ordinance amendments. The City Attorney's office would then work in a review mode. The same deadline for submission to the City Attorney's office should be kept in effect, i.e., Wednesday at 8:00 a.m. With the amount of drafting and clerical support substantially reduced, however, the City Attorney's office should be able to deliver all New Business items, reviewed and signed, to the Manager's office by Wednesday at 5:00 p.m.

In order for departments to effectively implement this recommendation, a workshop should be held for persons who prepare Board items, so that the Attorney's office can instruct them in the fine points of preparing a resolution. The City of Dallas uses a "Departmental Agenda Guide" for this purpose which includes a sample to follow for the drafting of resolutions which are routine "new business matters", i.e., engineering and architectural contracts, advertising for bids, awarding of contracts, land or easement acquisition, etc. For each of these situations, a one-page memo is provided in the Guide which suggests wording, appropriate attachments and an outline to follow. This type of Departmental Agenda Guide should be assembled for Pasadena which would include the agenda schedule, procedures for sign-offs, helpful hints for writing concise Board reports, and a guide for the drafting of resolutions. With the exception of a one-page memo circulated to his own department and division heads by Bill Lewis in January, 1980, I am unaware of any written guidelines on Board agenda deadlines and procedures. A well-prepared agenda manual should go a long way toward resolving confusion over deadlines and generally improving the quality of the product.

As noted earlier, the tardiness of agenda items cannot be entirely attributed to the City Attorney's office. There are a number of City Manager reports not requiring legal review which also fail to reach the Executive Assistant by Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. Publishing the schedule in an Agenda Manual may result in some improvement, however, an emphasis must also be placed on adherence to the adopted schedule. The City of Riverside, California (which has a Wednesday, 2:00 p.m. deadline at the City Manager's office for agenda items scheduled for its Tuesday Council meeting) will not accept any Council reports after that time unless they are stamped "urgent" and have a memo to the City Manager indicating why it is late and why it is essential to have it included on that week's agenda. If the agenda schedule continues to slip despite the implementation of the proposals suggested above, then we may want to give some consideration to a stricter enforcement procedure similar to that used by Riverside.

Just prior to her retirement, City Clerk Harriett Jenkins suggested that the entire agenda schedule be pushed back one day to allow the Clerk's office more time to get the agenda out on Friday. This type of drastic change should not be necessary if the departments adhere to the deadlines already established. Furthermore, we must be careful not to sacrifice substance for form. The City staff needs a reasonable amount of time in which to prepare items and backing up the schedule one day would preclude any possibility of responding to a Board request in a week's time. When the Board makes a request that staff return in a week with a report, there are only two working days available to research, write and type the report if it's to meet the City Clerk's Thursday noon deadline. Therefore, one week turn-around times should be avoided unless the matter is of an urgent nature. Two week turn-around times for revised reports or additional information should be utilized for more routine matters.

Distribution to the Board

As indicated previously, the agendas are distributed to the press and the Board on Friday evenings. Some jurisdictions employ a supplemental distribution on Monday evenings as well. Supplemental distributions, while helpful in getting last-minute items before the Board, should not be used in a regular fashion. The Board needs to get the full packet well in advance of the Tuesday meeting if it is to have sufficient time to read and digest this information. With rare exceptions, supplemental distributions should be confined to written information filed by the general public. The City of Pasadena does quite well in getting the final agenda packages into the hands of its Board well in advance of the Tuesday meeting. It should be noted that this attention to the timely delivery of information is not universal in local governments. The City of Rochester, New York presents its Council with the agenda packet at 5:00 p.m. on the day of the Council meeting. Kansas City, Missouri, "unless otherwise requested", also distributes agenda materials to the Council members on the day of the meeting. The City of Sacramento gets its packets into the Council hands by 11:00 a.m. on Friday, but continues to amend the agenda and accept additional material until 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday. Likewise, Savannah, Georgia, does not finalize the agenda for the Council until noon on the day of the session. Also, many jurisdictions do not have weekly business meetings, but rather conduct their meetings every two weeks. Local governments meeting bi-weekly include Huntington Beach, California, Santa Ana, California, and Arlington County, Virginia. Considering the volume of materials which must be written, reviewed, assembled and distributed on a weekly basis, it would appear that Pasadena's agenda process compares well with other large Council-Manager governments.

Internal Sign-Offs

Currently the City follows an erratic procedure for the review of agenda items. The intent is to have departments impacted by recommendations review and sign-off. For items with a fiscal impact, there is usually a joint sign-off by M.A.D. and Finance. The process is not consistently followed, however. Occasionally, a report will arrive on the Executive Assistant's desk, which has clear fiscal and personnel implications, or a major impact on another department and it will bear only the signature of the department head who prepared the report. At other times, reports have been received with so many signatories that they rival the Declaration of Independence!

Arlington County, Virginia, recently changed its format. Formerly department heads would sign the report along with the Manager. With Arlington's format, a "buckslip" is attached to the report so that the Manager knows the report has "made the rounds", but the buckslip is removed before the item is sent to the Board. Most jurisdictions, however, follow the format used by Pasadena where the

department head signatures appear on the Board reports. This current procedure is a good one, but requires some classification.

Currently, there is a joint sign-off by M.A.D. and the Director of Finance as to availability of funds. This appears to be a redundant exercise. The following procedural change is suggested:

- 1) Certification of availability of funds should be done by M.A.D. only.
- 2) M.A.D. should also determine if a Journal Voucher is needed and take the responsibility for requesting the Finance Department to prepare the Journal Voucher.
- 3) All other agenda items related to the subject of finance (including State and Federal Grant Applications) should continue to be submitted to Finance for sign-off.

Both M.A.D. and Finance concur with the above-listed recommendations. In addition to signing off on availability of funds, M.A.D. review should include a consideration of alternative fund sources and accuracy of data. M.A.D. had suggested that the "necessity" of an expenditure should also be included in this review process; however, it is my opinion that this role more properly belongs to the department head and the City Manager, and ultimately, of course, to the Board.

Agenda Review

During the course of this study, there have been a number of persons who have indicated an interest in participating in the Thursday afternoon "Agenda Review", however, extensively broadening the participation in this session could produce an unwieldy group seriously diminishing efficiency.

Various department heads mentioned that several years ago the City Clerk would distribute copies of the agenda at a Friday morning breakfast meeting chaired by the Assistant City Manager. At that time, department heads would get an early look at the upcoming agenda. A suggestion has been made to reinstate this type of meeting. Rather than expanding Agenda Review, an informal meeting of this type could be helpful. Department heads should not be unnecessarily tied up as each item listed is reviewed in detail, however. Instead, it should be an optional half-hour coffee and donuts session, where agendas are distributed, a quick review is made, and questions which were raised at the Thursday afternoon agenda session review can be referred to the appropriate department. This type of departmental participation would undoubtedly facilitate follow-up and improve interdepartmental coordination and cooperation.

Recommendations

- Allow the departments to draft their own resolutions and submit them to the City Attorney's office for review no later than Wednesday, 8:00 a.m.
- The City Attorney's office should adhere to the schedule for delivering agenda items to the City Manager's office by Wednesday at 5:00 p.m.
- Prepare a "Departmental Agenda Guide" which would include a guide for drafting resolutions, the agenda schedule, procedures for sign-offs, Board report format, and helpful hints for preparing well-written reports.
- Conduct a periodic workshop for all personnel involved in the agenda process to review the recommendations in the Agenda Guide.
- Emphasize strict adherence to agenda schedule. Enact enforcement procedures if necessary.
- Discourage the Board from requesting a report by the next meeting. Encourage two-week turn-around times.
- Utilize supplemental distributions for written comments from the public and for emergency items only.
- Continue policy of internal sign-offs on the Board reports with some clarification:
 - 1) Certification of availability of funds should be done by M.A.D. only.
 - 2) M.A.D. should determine the necessity for a Journal Voucher and forward request to Finance.
 - 3) All other agenda items related to Finance (including State and Federal Grant Applications) should continue to be submitted to Finance for sign-off.
- Hold informal Friday morning meetings to distribute agendas to interested department heads and to answer questions.

VI. The Board Report

Using a questionnaire, the five continuing members of the Board were asked if they were satisfied with the presentation of information received from the staff. While generally satisfied, Board members criticized reports as "too wordy" and "tedious". One Board member stated that reports are "too widely variable in quality" and another requested that fiscal impacts be clearly identified. A retiring member of the Board observed that agendas keep "growing heavier" and Directors must wade through an ever-increasing amount of paper. He suggested that Board reports be summarized in one page with additional detail provided for Board members interested in pursuing it.

On the following page is a suggested format to be used for preparing reports to the Board. The first four paragraphs of the report are designed to provide an "executive summary" which immediately gives the reader the critical information on the item. Therefore, the reading and comprehension of the reports by Board members will presumably be easier and less time-consuming. This format should also assist the preparer in ensuring that the information presented is orderly and complete.

If a report is a single page or less the Summary Section would be deleted in favor of a Background Section. If a report is greater than two pages, the Summary Section would be mandatory.

All fiscal impacts should be identified in the Fiscal Impact Section. If there is no impact, it should be so stated.

In matters where the Board is being requested to approve an expenditure or budgetary revision, M.A.D. has suggested that the question of whether funds are appropriated in the budget for the specified purpose should be answered clearly and precisely. If funds are budgeted, the account number and name should be stated. If funds are not budgeted, the report should indicate this and state the alternative source(s) of funding proposed. Other information which M.A.D. believes should be included in the Fiscal Impact Section is the future fiscal impact of decisions made today, e.g., a new program may be funded now out of salary savings with no appreciable impact, yet the Board should be reminded that it represents a net addition to the following year's budget. Other relevant information on fiscal impact which should be discussed where applicable includes: revenue impact, both short and long term; impact on the Capital Improvement Program; additional personnel requirements or changes in the established FTE level; and impact on maintenance costs.

SAMPLE BOARD REPORT FORMAT

TO: Board of Directors

Date

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT:

RECOMMENDATION:

No more than one paragraph.

PURPOSE:

No more than one paragraph.

SUMMARY:

No more than two paragraphs.

Summary can be deleted if report is a single page or less.

BACKGROUND:

This is the general discussion and necessary backup material to support the recommendation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Respectfully submitted,

City Manager

Prepared by:

Name; Title

Concurrence:

Name; Title

Name; Title

Many jurisdictions do not prepare Board reports on all items. Some topics of a routine nature are summarized in two or three sentences on the agenda itself. This type of communication may be appropriate for such things as tract map approvals and acceptances of subdivisions. The cities of Savannah and Dallas regularly summarize "New Business" action items on their Consent Calendar in this manner.

The City of Dallas "Departmental Agenda Guide" gives the following basic instructions to the staff:

"The City Council makes policy decisions on the basis of one sentence: the agenda item. Each item on the council agenda is an "agenda sentence". It is critical that the agenda sentence contain all the information necessary to make an informed decision. Because of the great volume of decisions to be made, it is equally important that the agenda sentence be concise.

The agenda sentence becomes an official city document, and a permanent record of the city's business. As public information, it must be clear and understandable to those not yet familiar with the action to be taken.

Responsibility

As public officials most familiar with the item of public business, it is your responsibility to:

1. Make sure all relevant information is in the agenda sentence.
2. Present the information logically.
3. Describe the item of city business clearly, so that it is understandable to those not yet familiar with it.

Basic Form

The agenda sentence should always answer these questions:

1. What?
2. How much?

Usually the agenda sentence also answers these questions:

1. Where?
2. Why?

It is often necessary to answer these questions:

1. Who?
2. When?

When constructing an agenda sentence, answer the appropriate questions in the following order:

1. What
2. Why
3. Where
4. Who
5. When
6. How much

Answering the six questions in order is the basic form of the agenda sentence."

Dallas does not rely exclusively on the "agenda sentence". On more complex subjects, a separate memo is forwarded to the Council members so that they will have access to background information on the issue. It would be interesting to experiment with the Dallas approach on routine administrative matters.

Ordinances

While staff has a tendency to overload the Board with details on administrative items and informational reports, the opposite is the case when presenting ordinances. Under the current system, the title of the ordinance is listed under Section XI of the Agenda and whether it is a first or second reading is also indicated. Often there is no "cover" memo summarizing the intent of the ordinance. For example, the April 14 agenda carried two ordinances, a first reading of an ordinance prescribing the powers and duties of the Community Development Commission and a second reading of the ordinance to amend Article 15 of the Charter. In neither case was there any type of transmittal memorandum. Rather, the Board members must work their way through the legal language to determine the thrust of the proposal. Major questions go unanswered as to the magnitude of the policy change, cost and revenue projections, and operational impacts. Kansas City, Missouri, routinely uses the form shown on the following page to introduce a proposed ordinance to its City Council. With some modifications, this type of "Ordinance Fact Sheet" would be a good addition to Pasadena's agenda procedures.

Recommendations

- Utilize a standard format for the preparation of Board reports which will provide a four paragraph "Executive Summary" and include a "Fiscal Impact" section.
- The "Fiscal Impact" section should state if funds have been budgeted for an expenditure, and indicate the name and number of the account. If funds are not budgeted, the report should so indicate and state the alternative sources of funding proposed. Future fiscal impacts should also be described. If there is no impact on the City's General Fund, this should be stated.

- Consider the use of an abbreviated format for routine administrative items similar to the system employed by the City of Dallas.
- Utilize an "Ordinance Fact Sheet" when presenting proposed ordinances to the City Board.

GENERAL Ordinance Fact Sheet

Ordinance Number

Brief Title	Approval Deadline	Reason

Details

Reason for Legislation

Discussion

(including relationship to other Council actions)

Positions / Recommendations

Sponsor	
Programs, Departments, or Groups Affected	
Applicants / Proponents	<p><i>Applicant</i></p> <p><i>City Department</i></p> <p><i>Other</i></p>
Opponents	<p><i>Groups or Individuals</i></p> <p><i>Basis of opposition</i></p>
Staff Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> For <input type="checkbox"/> Against <p><i>Reason Against</i></p>
Board or Commission Recommendation	<p><i>By</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> For <input type="checkbox"/> Against <input type="checkbox"/> No action taken <input type="checkbox"/> For, with revisions or conditions <i>(see details column for conditions)</i></p>
Council Committee Actions	<input type="checkbox"/> Do pass <input type="checkbox"/> Do pass (as amended) <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Sub. <input type="checkbox"/> Without Recommendation <input type="checkbox"/> Hold

Details

Policy / Program Impact

Policy or Program Change	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Operational Impact Assessment		

Finances

Cost & Revenue Projections	<i>Cost of Legislation</i>
	<i>Increase/Decrease in Revenue Expected Annually</i>
Fund Sources	

(Use this space for further discussion, if necessary)

Applicable Dates

Fact Sheet Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Reference Numbers

VII. Implementation of Recommendations

This report contains over 30 recommendations for revising the current agenda format and procedures. These suggestions, if implemented, would substantially affect the operations of both the Board and City staff. Therefore, a comprehensive review of this report and its recommendations should be conducted by both. The Executive Committee would appear to be the logical group to contribute staff input on these proposals. The finalized staff report should then be referred to the Board for its review and comment.

Once agreement has been reached on these various proposals, the timing of their implementation must be determined. August '81 would appear to be a good date since it would coincide with the new fiscal year, the hiring of a City Clerk, and the establishment of a Public Affairs Office. It would also allow sufficient time for the preparation of materials required by a new format and procedure. These could include a pre-printed first page for Board Reports, an Ordinance Fact Sheet, and a "Departmental Agenda Guide". To facilitate the transition, a half-day workshop should be held for all persons involved in agenda preparation.

Recommendations

- The recommendations in this report should be reviewed by both the staff and Board.
- Implementation of revised procedures should begin by August '81.
- A workshop should be held to facilitate implementation.

VIII. Summary of Recommendations

The Agenda Format

- Limit "Comments from the Floor" at the beginning of the Board meeting. Allow unrestricted public comment on non-agenda items at the end of the meeting.
- Schedule "Hearings and Discussions" throughout the day rather than in the morning only.
- The Mayor and the City Manager should jointly consider the procedures currently in use for the scheduling of hearings and discussions.
- Schedule "New Business" immediately after "Comments from the Floor".
- Claims to be handled in current manner, however, amounts and other information regarding claims should not be listed on the agenda.
- Delete the "Communications" section from the Board agenda.

Board Action or Administrative Review

- Modify procedures for transferring funds within programs budgeted so that Board approval is not required.
- Board approval for budgetary modifications should only be required for: interfund transfers; interdepartmental transfers, intradepartmental program transfers exceeding \$10,000; and appropriations from the General Fund reserve.
- Revise the zoning appeal procedures to eliminate the substantial number of appeals now coming before the Board. This should be done by either designating the Planning Commission as the appeals body or by designating a system of administrative adjudication which would significantly narrow the issues coming before the Board for decision.
- Amend the ordinance which requires the City Board to approve all specifications prior to bid. Revise the procedure to permit the City Manager to approve specifications.
- Amend the charter to increase the \$10,000 limitation on purchase orders to at least \$25,000.

Interface with the Public

- Provide a phone number for citizens to call to check on the progress of the agenda.
- Consider the establishment of a 20-minute question and answer session for the press prior to the lunch break.

- Limit public comments on non-agenda items at the beginning of the meeting. Allow unrestricted public comment at the end of the meeting.
- Encourage brevity in public comments with a notice on the agenda and on the speaker's podium.
- Consider the establishment of a "personal appearance request procedure" similar to the Riverside, California, system.
- Use speakers cards at all noticed hearings.
- Relax the deadline for written comments from the general public and use a supplemental Monday night or Tuesday morning distribution if necessary.

Internal Review

- Allow the departments to draft their own resolutions and submit them to the City Attorney's office for review no later than Wednesday at 8:00 a.m.
- The City Attorney's office should adhere to the schedule for delivering agenda items to the City Manager's office by Wednesday at 5:00 p.m.
- Prepare a "Departmental Agenda Guide" which would include a guide for drafting resolutions, the agenda schedule, procedures for sign-offs, Board report format, and helpful hints for preparing well-written reports.
- Conduct a workshop for all personnel involved in the agenda process to review the recommendations in the Agenda Guide.
- Emphasize strict adherence to the agenda schedule. Enact enforcement procedures if necessary.
- Discourage the Board from requesting a report by the next meeting. Encourage two-week-turnaround times.
- Utilize supplemental distributions for written comments from the public and for emergency items only.
- Continue policy of Internal Signoffs on the Board reports with some clarification:
 - 1) Clarification of availability of funds should be done by M.A.D. only.
 - 2) M.A.D. should determine the necessity for a Journal Voucher and forward the request to Finance.

- 3) All other agenda items related to Finance (including State and Federal Grant Applications) should continue to be submitted to Finance for sign-off.
- Hold informal Friday morning meetings to distribute agendas to interested department heads and to answer questions.

The Board Report

- Utilize a standard format for the preparation of Board reports which will provide a four paragraph "Executive Summary" and include a "Fiscal Impact" section.
- The "Fiscal Impact" section should state if funds have been budgeted for an expenditure, and indicate the name and number of the account. If funds have not been budgeted, the report should so state and indicate the alternative sources of funding proposed. Future fiscal impact should also be described. If there is no fiscal impacts on the City's General Fund, this should be stated.
- Consider the use of an abbreviated format for routine administrative items similar to the system employed by the City of Dallas.
- Utilize an "Ordinance Fact Sheet" when presenting proposed ordinances to the City Board.

Implementation of Recommendations

- The recommendations in this report should be reviewed by both the staff and Board.
- Implementation of revised procedures should begin in August '81.
- A workshop should be held to facilitate implementation.

Appendix 1

Management and Comments in Other Jurisdictions

City of Savannah, Georgia - Savannah has a distinct system for handling public comment on non-agenda items. Individuals wishing to address the Council must send a formal letter of request to a Staff Assistant to the City Manager before a scheduled Council meeting, giving their name and topic which they wish to discuss. The Assistant contacts individuals if clarification is needed. A list is made, and all discussion of non-agenda items is handled directly after the minutes are read at the beginning of each Council meeting. Individuals are requested to keep within a 2-3 minute time limit, although this can be relaxed at the discretion of the Mayor. During scheduled public hearings, all public comment is heard after the appropriate presentations, with individuals allowed to speak for as long as they want. In the case of controversial issues attracting larger numbers, groups are asked to use representatives who will speak for those present. A list is used to record those present but unable to speak, with all the names subsequently attached to the minutes of the hearing.

City of Kansas City, Missouri - The City Council of Kansas City does not recognize comments from the floor on any item, agenda and non-agenda, during Council meetings. Rather, Kansas City uses a standing committee system that meets the day before normal Council meetings (The Council meets Fridays, January to June; Thursdays, from July to December). Committee meetings are used to hear public comments on non-agenda and scheduled public hearings. Individuals may speak for as long as they choose during both types of sessions, although comments rarely exceed 4-5 minutes. Public hearings are scheduled during Council meetings, with occasional solicitations for public comment relegated for discussions of the budget. People do not come into Council meetings and expect to speak.

Arlington County, Virginia - The Council in Arlington County schedules public comment on non-agenda items for the fourth Saturday of each month. During this Council meeting, an agenda item entitled, "Citizen Comment" is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. At this time, an unlimited number of individuals are allowed to speak on agenda and non-agenda items, for an unlimited amount of time. During scheduled public hearings, individuals must submit a form requesting to comment before the Council. On the form, individuals must include their names, topic of discussion, and desired amount of time they wish to speak—either 2 or 5 minutes. Those requesting to make 2-minute presentations go first; those asking for 5 minutes go second. A timer is used by the County Clerk to ensure that the time limit is upheld. Depending on the issue, the Council allows individuals to go beyond their specified time allotment.

City of Alexandria, Virginia - The City Council of Alexandria, Virginia, does not allow public comments during their monthly legislative meetings. Instead, the second and fourth Tuesdays, and the Saturday after the second Tuesday of each month, are devoted to "public hearing meetings". The 9:30 agenda item for these meetings is called the "Public Discussion Period".

At the beginning of each meeting, up to six people may sign up to discuss any issue of their choosing for up to 5 minutes each. The sign-up form, which goes to the City Clerk, asks for names, addresses, if the individual is being compensated for his or her appearance, and if the individual is representing an organization. Individuals who need more than 5 minutes for their presentation may petition for more time to the City Clerk the day before the public hearing meeting, or arrange for others to code their 5 minutes. Alexandria uses a timer and a light to keep presentations within their allotted time period. Scheduled presentations during legislative meetings do not provide for public input.

City of Phoenix, Arizona - The City of Phoenix has two types of Council meetings: Formal Sessions and Policy Sessions. Formal Sessions are used to enact ordinances and conduct city business; Policy Sessions are used as study meetings encouraging general discussion, with no legally binding actions taken. During Policy Sessions, individuals are recognized to speak at the discretion of the Mayor; there is no requirement that the public must be heard; and non-agenda items are not discussed. The Formal Session does allow comment on agenda items, with the amount of time allotted for individual discussion at the Mayor's discretion. The last item on the agenda of the Formal Session is entitled, "Petition Request", where non-agenda items are addressed. Two or three Council members stay (on a rotational basis) for the Petition Request period. Individuals wishing to speak must fill out a Request Card with their name and topic of discussion listed. With staff members present, the Council orders that the appropriate department handle the issue raised. A light is used by a Council member during the Petition Request period to notify the citizen that their presentation should be completed.

Montgomery County, Maryland - Allows 3 minutes for individual presentations at hearings and 5 minutes for testimony on behalf of a group. A timer is used to enforce the limits. The staff categorizes all speakers and organizes them into an agenda for testimony, based on advance notice received from prospective speakers. For budget hearings, testimony is organized according to the subject (areas of the budget) each speaker plans to address. In other cases, speakers are arranged into Pro and Con Groups so the Council can digest the testimony in an organized way. Although potential speakers are urged to notify the staff before a hearing, additional comments are taken from the floor at the end of the meeting. Most citizens, however, call in advance.

City of Dallas, Texas - The City of Dallas sets aside two time periods during Council meetings for non-agenda items. The first is at the beginning of the meeting, where individuals are allotted a 3-minute time limit. At the end of the Council meeting, individuals are allowed a 5-minute limit. For either time slot, speakers must first sign up either on the day of the Council meeting, or the day before in the office of the City Secretary. When signing up to speak, Dallas requests the name of the individual making the presentation, the topic, how they had heard about this option, and the City staff (if any) contacted on the issue in question. A timer and a bell are used to limit individuals to 3 or 5 minutes. All public hearings are held at 2:00 p.m., even if the Consent Agenda for that day has yet to be completed. Once again, a 5-minute time limit is enforced, although representatives of groups are

given 15 minutes to make their presentations, with the names of those represented, but unable to present, listed and made part of the record.

City of Wichita, Kansas - The first item listed on every agenda in the City of Wichita is entitled, "Public Agenda". The public agenda allots 5 minutes each for up to five people to speak on any matter except those issues in litigation and discussion of city personnel. Individuals may request an extension of the 5-minute limit, which is granted only when a majority of the Council is in agreement. Those wishing to speak must submit a request by noon of Wednesday before the following Tuesday meeting, with information listing the topic to be discussed, the address, and telephone number of the citizen included. Scheduled public hearings are subject to a city-wide, 10-day notification policy. At the conclusion of the appropriate presentations, the Mayor calls for public input, again limiting comments to 5 minutes.

City of Rockville, Maryland - The City of Rockville, Maryland, opens the floor to citizen comments at a specific time—8:15 p.m.—each week. The "Citizen forum" places no time limits or restrictions on the numbers that may comment before the Council. The lone restriction imposed is that there be no discussion of issues scheduled for public hearings. A City Newsletter mailed to every household in Rockville advertises the dates, times, and topics of scheduled public hearings. Those wishing to address the Council must call in beforehand, or sign up the evening of the meeting to inform the Council and staff that they wish to comment. 3 minutes are given for individual comments, 5 minutes for those representing organizations. Individuals may approach the Council a second time at the conclusion of all presentations. Both a timer and a bell are used to limit discursiveness and abuses.

City of Sacramento - The City of Sacramento has an agenda item labelled "Citizens Addressing Council", generally in the middle of the agenda. Comments are limited to three minutes. During public hearings, individuals may comment on each item presented, without a time limit imposed. With controversial items, or those issues attracting larger audiences, a spokesman is called forward to represent the large group present.

City of Santa Ana - Santa Ana has an agenda item called "Period of Oral Communication" to facilitate comments from the public on non-agenda items. Those wishing to address the City Council must submit a slip of paper which includes a request for the permission to speak, the individual's name, and the topic to be discussed. Individuals are given a 5-minute time limit, with a Green, Yellow, and Red lighting device used to signal when the 5-minute period has expired. This same system is used during scheduled public hearings, with a 5-minute limit imposed on comments from the floor, as well as the comments of applicants in the hearing. Extensions are granted at the discretion of the Council in collective agreement.

City of Anaheim - The City of Anaheim does not permit comments from the floor on non-agenda items at a particular time during Council meetings. There is no separate listing on the agenda asking for public comment. Rather, those wishing to speak forward a note to the City Clerk listing their name and desired topic of discussion, with the note then forwarded to the Mayor who



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can decide whether or not to call the individual forward for a 5-minute presentation. During scheduled public hearings, the Mayor solicits comments from the floor, informing participants that although there is no time limit on their discussion, comments should be kept as brief as possible. Representatives of large groups are often asked to come forward to comment.

City of Fresno - The City of Fresno permits comments from the public on non-agenda items at particular times during Council meetings. Individuals wishing to address the Council must submit a Request-To-Appear letter to the City Manager's office 10 days before the Council meeting of their choice, listing their name, background, and topic of discussion. The letter is then referred to the appropriate city staff, with up to 50% of all requests for appearance before the Council resolved over the phone, or by appropriate staff action. For cases that must appear before the Council, special times are arranged with the citizen, and their names entered onto the agenda. Individuals are limited to 5-minute presentations, with a Green, Yellow, and Red lighting device signalling when their presentation time has expired. For public hearings, the Mayor asks for audience input at the conclusion of the topic discussed, with the 5-minute time limit enforced. Fresno distributes a one page description of this process as individuals enter the City Council Chamber.

City of Huntington Beach - The fifth item on every agenda of the City Council of Huntington Beach is entitled "Public Comments", which allows individuals a 3-minute time limit to comment on any topic of their choosing. Thirty minutes are devoted to public comments. Individuals wishing to speak must fill out a form available in the Council Chamber, give it to the City Clerk, with the Mayor calling individuals forward. Those who have signed up and wish to speak on related issues may relinquish their 3 minutes to a single speaker, with a limit of 9 minutes per person in such circumstances. A timer and bell are used by the City Clerk to ensure that the time limit is upheld. During scheduled public hearings, public comments from the floor are solicited with no time limit imposed, although representatives of large groups are encouraged to speak. Attachments are distributed to the audience before Council meetings detailing the rules, procedures, and limits on speaking.

City of Long Beach - The 2:00 p.m. time slot on every other Tuesday agenda of the City Council of Long Beach is reserved for "Citizens Comments". Individuals are allowed to come forward and speak for 5 minutes each. Signs posted in the lobby of the Council Chambers and on the lectern itself notify the public that they are limited to 5-minute presentations, and to non-agenda items exclusively. Public hearings are always scheduled for the afternoon, with the public allowed to comment using a loosely regulated 5-minute time limit.

City of Riverside - The City of Riverside allows comments from the floor on non-agenda items at the conclusion of all the scheduled business. There is no time limit imposed on such comments. Comments on agenda items and public hearings are restricted to 3 minutes for individuals, 5 minutes for a spokesman of a group. On items that attract a large number of commentators, a timer and placard are used to enforce the time restrictions, with the Mayor continually instructing the public to remain within the time limit.